

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS AFTER DINNER
AMADOR OFFICERS' CLUB
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Secretary Perry: Thank you very much, Barry, for that warm introduction. I wish my parents had been here to hear that. (Laughter) My father would have enjoyed hearing it. My mother would have believed it! (Laughter)

Today marks the General's 128th day as CINCSOUTH. They've been a very full 128 days. He's been on the road for 56 of those days. He made 15 trips. He's hosted 11 visits to this command, and he's given 36 major addresses or congressional testimonies. Clearly, he's tackling his job at SOUTHCOM with the same unrelenting, hard-charging attitude that led... Well, this may be only an apocryphal story, but it has been said that he would have been to Baghdad before the Iraqis had he not been restrained by his commanding general. (Laughter) Those of you who work with him know what I'm talking about.

I've worked with him before. Therefore, before I came down here, I had to double-check the schedule he arranged for me. It's a good thing I did, because I had to call him before I came down and said, "No, I don't want a midnight briefing the evening I arrive." (Laughter)

I'm really honored to be here. This is my first official visit to SOUTHCOM. I came away with two very strong convictions. First of all, I am proud to be the Secretary of the enormously strong team you have down here. The dedicated, professional, competent people everywhere from the non-coms who briefed me today up to the leadership of this command. I am proud to be your Secretary.

Secondly, you can be rightly proud of the job that you're doing here, both because of the importance of it and because of the skill with which you are carrying

it out. What you're doing is contributing to the stability of this region in a unique way, and in a way that not only is important to this region, but is important to the national security of the United States.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Thomas Payne, looking forward, said, "We have it in our power to begin the world again." Now, we're at the end of the Cold War and we have to begin our national security world again. And not only do we have it in our power to do this, but we have a great need to do it, and we must get on with it.

As the Secretary, I have tried to define the task of beginning the world again in three broad categories. The first of those categories is that we have to do everything we can do to prevent a reemergence of the nuclear threat that characterized the Cold War. That's in the background now. It's off our horizon. We're not thinking about it. But we cannot pocket that yet. We have to work at it to be sure that that threat does not reemerge.

Today only one country -- Russia -- has a sufficient number of nuclear weapons to threaten our national survival. Therefore, our policy in Russia has to be first and foremost in a national security consideration, and has to be directed to doing what we can to prevent a reoccurrence of that threat with which we lived for most of our adult lives.

That's why in the Defense Department we're putting our resources, our energy, our defense dollars to helping Russia dismantle their nuclear arsenal. It seems like a strange way to be spending defense dollars -- helping another country dismantle their nuclear arsenal. This is what we call in the Defense Department "defense by other means." It's easier to help them dismantle them than it is to try to build defenses against them.

Two months ago I was in Russia and Ukraine overseeing the work that we're doing in that regard. While I was in Ukraine I asked President Kravchuk if I could go down and see this work in progress. He said yes, so the Minister of Defense and I, General Radetsky, went down to Pervomaysk, which was what was one of the largest and most modern operational ICBM sites in all of the former Soviet Union. They had SS-24s located there, and a total of 800 warheads -- all of them pointed at the United States.

When I got there, they took me down into their control center 12 stories underground, and there were two young Russians operating this control center. They thought the thing that I would be interested in seeing was a practice launch of the missiles, so they went through the checkout one-by-one as if they were getting ready to launch these missiles. I'll tell you, it was an eery feeling to be standing there watching them go through this checkout, to realize they controlled 800

warheads -- enough to destroy every city in the United States. That brought home to me, I think more than any other scene I've ever been involved with, the full horror of the kind of threat posed to our country, indeed posed to the whole world, by nuclear weapons.

We then left the control center and went out to the silos. They had the lids open on the silos and I could stand and peer down into the silos. The missile was sitting there, the SS-24 missile, but all the warheads were gone because the previous week they had shipped them out to a site where they were going to dismantle them. That gave me a very warm feeling, to see the absence of the warheads on that site.

This is one of the ways we're spending our time and energies to try to do what we can to prevent a reemergence of this nuclear threat to the United States.

The second challenge we're faced with today, and which I see as occupying my primary attention as Secretary of Defense, is to reformulate the policies for the use or the threat of use, of military power in this post Cold War era where we're confronted with the potential of regional conflicts -- the potential of peacekeeping operations that are very different from the way wars have been characterized in the past.

In all of these post Cold War contingencies, we have limited policy objectives. If you contrast that to World War II -- I just came back from the commemorations at Normandy. Thinking back to World War II, our objective was easy to state. It was complete and total victory. We were willing to use, and did use, every bit of military power that was available to us to achieve that objective.

During the Cold War our objective also was easy to state. We wanted to deter an attack by Soviet forces. We wanted to prevent a nuclear holocaust.

Today the problems we face are much more complex, very different from those. None of these contingencies which we're facing today threaten America's national survival. So while we have national interests at stake, we do not have supreme national interests at stake.

As we look at these different contingencies, whether they be regional war or peacekeeping or humanitarian operations, we see that each is different, but they all have one thing in common. That is, they are situations where our political objectives are limited and therefore, the use, or the threat of use, of military power will be very selective. This has caused a fair amount of confusion in the country, particularly when our military power was actually called upon and had to be used.

Today we face challenges in Bosnia, Haiti, Korea. And in each of these, the consideration of the use of military power has to follow from a clear definition of what our political objectives in that region is.

Let me give you an example in Bosnia, because that's a region of the world in which there's been much confusion. I'll start off by saying what our political objective is not. That is, it is not to become a combatant in that war, and it's not to win a military victory. That is not what we are doing in Bosnia today.

We are there with two important but limited objectives. The first of those is to try to achieve a cessation of hostilities followed by a peace agreement. Secondly, recognizing that this may take some time to achieve, to do everything we can to reduce the level of violence, especially the civilian suffering, that has taken place in that country. Those, in simplified terms, are the two objectives we're pursuing in Bosnia today.

We have made a major effort to achieving a peace agreement there, and in just the last few months we've made major progress in that regard. As we speak we have a very shaky cessation of hostilities in Bosnia, and we have an agreement among the four major powers overseeing that activity -- Russia, America, England, France -- as to what the terms of a peace agreement can be. Now all we have to do is get the combatants on the ground to agree that that's what the terms ought to be.

We have one big thing going for us in these terms which we've agreed to, and that is both of the combatants have rejected them. That means we probably have got it just about right. So we will pursue that and pursue it vigorously in the months ahead, and I think we've got a shot at finally getting that war brought to an end.

In the meantime, we are working, and we have been working for the last year, really, to try to reduce the level of violence there, and we're doing that through military action by U.S. involvement and a NATO air fleet that is specifically designed to support the peacekeeping operations there.

The first part of that is a program which is to stop the aerial bombardment that at one time was going on in Bosnia. A little over a year ago the cities in Bosnia were being bombed, and we made an ultimatum from NATO that there would be no more bombing, or that a NATO airplane would shoot down the airplane that was doing the bombing. Since that time now, it's been a little over a year, there's only been one attempt at bombing by six Serbian planes -- four of which were immediately shot down by two F-16s, and since then, there have been no more repeated attempts at bombing. So that program has been quite successful.

The second program was to stop the artillery bombardment of cities in Bosnia. That first ultimatum was made a little over four months ago at Sarajevo. Before that ultimatum was made, the bombardment of that city sometimes exceeded a thousand rounds a day going into the city. There had been casualties in excess of 40,000 in the year and a half of bombardment of the city. Since that ultimatum, there's been no bombardment of the city. We've now gone four months and there's a more-or-less normal semblance of living again in Sarajevo. We have subsequently extended that artillery bombardment cessation to five other cities in Bosnia.

In sum, nothing we are doing there is winning the war, but what we are doing has been quite successful in reducing the level of violence. And indeed, there's some reason to be optimistic that what we're doing diplomatically may in time bring about an end to that war.

Let me go to my third major objective as the Secretary of Defense. That is to manage the post-Cold War drawdown of our forces so that what comes out at the other end is an armed force that's as capable five years from now or ten years from now as the one we have today.

This is, let me remind you, the third major drawdown we've had since the end of the 2nd World War. The first one, which occurred right after the 2nd World War, we went in five years from what was arguably the greatest military force ever assembled on the earth, to a military force which was almost pushed off the Korean Peninsula by a third rate military power. So arguably that drawdown was not done well.

After the Vietnam War we had a second drawdown, and five years after we started that, General Shy Meyer proclaimed that we had a "hollow army" and he was right.

Now we're going through a third drawdown, and this time we've got to get it right.

During the 2nd World War, Winston Churchill was commenting to one of his aides who was upset with the Americans, and he was trying to calm him down and said, "You can always count on Americans to do the right thing, after having first exhausted all other alternatives." (Laughter) I believe we have exhausted the alternatives of how to do the drawdown, and we're ready now to do the right thing, to do it the right way.

We have made the painful decision, first of all, that we had to cut force structure in order to protect quality, in order to protect readiness. We made the

decision then, that whatever size our military force is, it will be at a high level of training and a high level of effectiveness.

Probably the biggest single task that I have as the Secretary of Defense is to set priorities for the budget. I have set those priorities as clearly and as unambiguously as I know how to in the preparation of the '95 fiscal guidance. I stated that readiness was the top priority, and that any other priority set by me or any other official in the Department of Defense could be traded off in favor of readiness. That has resulted in the FY95 budget which, among other things, shows an increase in the O&M account, even though the forces are decreasing. In other words, it is showing a reflection of a priority which says that we will be putting our money where our mouth is, and we will be spending the necessary money to maintain the readiness and the quality of our force.

I recognize that to have a ready force we must emphasize maintaining the quality of the force. Today, our men and women in uniform are smart, competent, and well trained. Everywhere I go from the Pentagon to the DMZ in Korea to the flight line at Aviano, to SOUTHCOM, I am deeply impressed with the pride and the enthusiasm of the men and women who make up the armed forces of the United States.

The good news, then, is that we have been able to maintain the quality of the forces, despite the uncertainty and the turbulence of the drawdown. The better news is that this drawdown is almost over. We have one more fiscal year to go of drawdown, and then we will hit the level of forces at which we will stabilize.

If I look at your problems here in SOUTHCOM, I realize that the course that was set by the Panama Canal Treaty implementation plan will present you here with challenges in the near and in the intermediate future. Samuel Johnson once said that, "Change is inconvenient, even if it is for the better." And the enormous changes you are experiencing here affect not only SOUTHCOM as a whole, but also the lives of each of you as individuals, and the lives of the men and the women under your command.

I'm sure that it's not easy to say goodbye to a stellar unit like the 193rd Infantry Brigade which has served the cause of freedom and security in Panama now for some 32 years. But as you and those you command go about implementing the Canal Treaty, keep this in mind -- your competence and your professionalism will show the world that the United States is committed to honoring its obligations. In fact much of the work you do every month and every day sets a standard and example for others in the armed forces all over the United States. The military-to-military programs that SOUTHCOM implements not only provide training for our forces, but also produce tangible benefits to the host countries.

I was most impressed today by the extensive use that you're making of reserve components. I think that is a model for the use of the reserve components not only for the benefit to this command and to the host countries here, but to the training of those reserve forces. This is an example I want to use all over the country when I talk about how to make most effective use of Reserve and National Guard forces.

From my visit here I will take with me an increased awareness of the unique challenges facing SOUTHCOM, and I will leave from here knowing that under General McCaffrey's inspired leadership that SOUTHCOM is as prepared as ever to fulfill its mission. Those missions are directing the U.S. armed forces, supporting democracy, fostering economic and social progress, strengthening the military relations, supporting counter-drug activities, and finally, implementing the Panama Canal treaties. These are what you do here every day, and you do it with great skill, and you do it with great benefit to our nation.

You should know that your work will pay great dividends down the road. The payoff will come years from now in some unforeseen crisis or emergency, and your successors will hold you and the professionalism of your work in deep gratitude.

I would like to close by describing a painting that hangs outside my office in the Pentagon. It depicts a poignant scene of a serviceman with his family in church. Clearly, he is praying before deployment and long separation from his family. Below the painting is a wonderful inscription from Isaiah. In it God says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?" Isaiah replies, "Here am I. Send me."

The men and the women of SOUTHCOM answer this call every day. They say, "Here am I. Send me." And words cannot express the gratitude which I feel and which our nation feels for your service.

Thank you very much.

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